1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

its own grub and this principle is rigidly adhered to in summer, when the people live in Lower Post within easy contact of the stores. In winter, however, shortages of grub frequently arise and a family often has to be assisted until it has accumulated sufficient fur to undertake a journey to the trading post to restock depleted supplies.

Periods of hunger often occur among the Kaska. There are several reasons why this happens. A man sometimes errs in estimating his winter outfit. Often a minimal supply of grub must be shared with more unfortunate relatives. A man may also lack the money or credit to buy sufficient food. When any one or a combination of these conditions occur, and the family cannot kill sufficient meat to take the place of grub, acute and serious food shortage results. Hunger is never pleasant to the Indian, yet the average man and women is able to accept temporary periods of food shortage without manifest alarm and overtly tends to minimize such experiences. Despite the anxiety concerning food, most people do not carefully ration their winter outfits. As a result, shortages are discovered only when the supply of a particular commodity is already almost exhausted.

A period of hunger was reported to have occurred in Old Man's settlement during the winter of 1939-40. All the grub had been eaten and there was no meat. Included in the several families living in this settlement at the time were Old Wiley, his wife, and children; they had not purchased a winter outfit. "They always had no grub. Old Wiley never trap," Old Man explained. "Girls, gee they tough; they strong. They didn't feel no hungry. They sing around, cut wood." After four days with scarcely any food, Old Man's son-in-law, Harry Lang, killed a dozen chickens, and then Old Man brought down nine more fowl. Everybody ate chicken. The following day Harry left again to hunt moose. He killed one moose but lost another. "I got one marten," Old Man related. "I got seven skin that time." He took the marten and traveled to a white man's home twenty miles upriver. This white trapper gave Old Man "nearly two hundred pound grub for one marten. Here it is, we come back with load of grub. Here it is, they all left. They went to Excited Lake. We got to Excited Lake. Everybody hungry." The people had already consumed the whole of Harry's moose. "We come in with grub. I think it last about three days." In March, Harry took Old Man's skins to Lower Post from where he returned with a sledful of grub.

Associated with the familiarity of hunger is the fact that people are always ready to accept food. A gift of food is recognized as one of the most important presents. In children the desire for food shows itself starkly, being as yet unmodified by socially patterned inhibitions on emotional expression. Young boys entering the ethnographer's home and seeing his children eating stared avidly and sometimes snatched at leftovers which were abandoned on the plates.

For most of the Indians the ideal diet consists of a balance between meat and grub. These need not necessarily appear together at every meal but some meat in the course of a day is regarded as indispensable. Either a diet of straight meat without grub or straight grub without meat is regarded as unfortunate. Not only is a straight grub diet less appetizing, but people are aware that reliance on such food causes staples to diminish rapidly and therefore increases the danger of running short. Living on straight grub also involves a greater expense; meat is free, but grub must be purchased at relatively high prices. Only one or two old women, like Mrs. Man, are content with a straight meat diet accompanied by little more

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

fat eaten successively. Some people smear cold lard on lean fried meat in order to improve the flavor. The large colon of the moose is cut open, scraped, washed, and then fried in lard. If lynx is eaten, it is generally boiled with a change of water. Berries are eaten raw and also cooked with sugar. Eggs are both fried and boiled.

Flour is generally prepared in the form of bannock, which is also known as baking powder bread, less often as yeast bread. In making bannock two tablespoonfuls of baking powder are added to two cups of flour with a half teaspoonful of salt (hunters usually carry flour already mixed with these ingredients for making bannock). Two tablespoonfuls of sugar are optional for the dough, as is a teaspoonful of cinnamon. One cup of water is added to the dry ingredients, and the mixture stirred with a spoon. The dough is then formed into a single round loaf, which is usually scored, or into individual round rolls, about two inches in diameter, and placed in a frying pan to fry in deep fat until brown on both sides. After both sides have browned, the bread is revolved on the edges until these are brown. Sometimes bannock is baked in a moderate amount of fat in a moderately hot oven, the loaf being basted with melted shortening before closing the oven. At an open fire bannock may be either fried or baked. In baking, the frying pan is set at an angle in front of a hot fire so that the heat is reflected on the dough, which has been spread with melted shortening. An even browning is assured by revolving the loaf as one part browns. Not until baking powder has been exhausted do people trouble to make yeast bread. The bread is baked in an oven or, if a stove lacks a baking compartment, in a straight kettle set on top of the stove and surrounded with hot rocks.

Special foods are not prepared for children. During the day they may ask for bannock and spread it with sugar, cooked berries or, when available, jam or butter. In summer a favorite with children is "ice cream," which they prepare from soap berries placed in a bowl and mashed with a wet spoon. Three parts of sugar are added to one part of berries and the mixture beaten until a thick froth appears. Children up to adolescence are also fond of fixing a mixture of dry milk and sugar added to a little water; the thick cream that results is eaten with a spoon. In winter "ice cream" is sometimes said to be made of powdered milk mixed with snow and sugar.

Throughout the year people eat three main meals a day, one upon arising, another toward the middle of the day, and one in the evening. If the family expects the return of one of its members late at night, tea and other food is often kept warm awaiting the person. In a cabin, meals are eaten from a table; in tents, food is eaten on the ground. Old Man reported that his present wife had to learn to eat from a table. For a long time she refused to do this but ate alone on the floor of the cabin while her husband and his children ate from the table. She still does all her sewing and other work on the floor, setting her sewing machine on an overturned box. A family always eats as a unit. Only on meat packing expeditions was sexual division of eating observed, the men and boys cooking their own food at their own fire, and women at another. Unless they are ill, people eat heartily rather than sparingly but without hurry or noise. The upper part of the body may be slightly bent toward the plate, but a person does not eat hunched over his food. Meals are accompanied by conversation and care is always taken not to waste food. Only inedible scraps are fed to dogs.

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A small bag of grease was carried attached to the same neck string as the drinking tube or to the ornamented flaps of the latter, and every day, early in the morning, the girl smeared her mouth or lips so she would not require much food. The sack was replenished from time to time as required. (See National Museum Specimen No. 48.)

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For the first three to five days, the girl when eating wore a necklace consisting of a bent willow rod wrapped with hair of goat or sheep, etc. Of each kind of variety of meat she ate, she tied a small portion to the necklace with a string. This was done so the game would not become angry or sorry because she (a pubescent) had eaten of their flesh. If the animals became sorry, insulted, or angry they would withhold (or withdraw) themselves and the hunters would be unable to get them or have other bad luck in hunting them. For the same reasons fresh meat was taboo. If, by necessity, other meat or food not being available, the girl had to eat fresh meat of the principal game, she wore a mask whilst eating it. These masks were made of light willow hoops covered with skin of goat, sheep or other game animals. The only fresh meat which girls could eat with impunity was that of porcupine, ptarmigan and the different varieties of grouse. On the first day the girl smeared her face with pitch or gum of trees, and blackened it by rubbing charcoal over

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when they commenced to train whilst others were quite young. Boys did not have the dangerous powers of girls during adolescence and therefore they had fewer restrictions put on them. They also went through fewer ceremonies and the length of their training period was less definite. Almost the only object in the training of boys was to obtain manitous. Very few special ceremonies or training were in vogue for perfecting boys in certain careers, and very little attention was paid to gymnastics and special physical exercises. Usually they continued to train only until such time as had obtained the manitous. Whilst seeking their manitous lads went off alone on trips in the mountains, remaining away from two or three to upwards of ten days at a time. The beginning of training was ushered in by a fast, usually of four days duration, on the first trip to the mountains. Some fasted again on later trips for shorter periods. Some lads washed or bathed to a considerable extent whilst others did not. In the same way some lads sweat-bathed and others not. Evidently washing and sweat-bathing were not as universal nor considered as important as among the Salish tribes. Each lad followed his own bent, and had to some extent his own methods of procedure in trying to obtain his manitou. Some desired different manitous from others. Some had their minds set on obtaining a certain manitou

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6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

fish-eating ducks made them unpopular for food and the raven was deemed to be inedible. Porcupine and bear brains exercised a debilitating effect on the body and hence were not used in preparing food. In periods of severe hunger the poorer tasting foods and, perhaps, even the magically dangerous animals like mink and otter would be consumed. Under the stress of starvation selectivity broke down to a point where moosehide might be eaten. Although strong repugnance governed the consumption of human flesh,[18] unproductive periods accompanied by severe hunger sometimes led to cannibalism. Tales of confirmed cannibals occur in oral tradition. There is the story of a man widely feared for his perverted appetite, which led him to regard human beings as game. He ate anyone he came across, including his wife and several children. Three sons, however, he spared because they could work for him. Indeed, they specialized in the task of killing men for their cannibal father after the latter grew too old to hunt. Approaching a camp this man would say, "You can kill birds for me now." Then, while the boys went off he started water boiling in readiness for the meat that they would bring back. The tale ends with the old cannibal and his sons meeting death at the hands of an intended victim who possessed exceptionally strong supernatural power.

Edible foods were both prepared for immediate consumption and preserved to be eaten at a later time. Boiling constituted the primary technique of cooking. Some meats, like lynx, were double boiled, the first water being discarded. After the meat had been cooked a "soup" was customarily made, onion greens or animal blood being added to the stock. "Soup took the place of tea in the old days. When people had finished with the meat they always drank the water in which the meat had been cooked." Several methods of boiling were known. Water placed in a basket tightly woven from split spruce roots could be brought to a boil with the aid of hot stones picked from ashes with spruce brush and blown free of dirt. The meat, cut in small pieces, was dropped into the boiling liquid. These vessels sometimes rested on the ground but were also supported a foot or so above the earth on a circle of wooden pegs. Another way of bringing water to boil is reminiscent of the Plains Indians. A pit was dug in the soil and lined with semi-tanned skin or, less commonly, with grass. Hot stones constituted the source of heat and keeping the top of the pit covered with spruce bark helped to retain the steam. Caribou and moose stomachs supplied another variety of container in which food could be cooked. The organ was first carefully warmed in front of the blaze to make it dry and hard. Later it might be suspended over the fire to cook the contents. Vegetables boiled included lily bulbs, muskeg apples, and fern roots, the latter only after being stripped of their outer bark. Dried wild rose petals were "powdered" before cooking. Mashing berries during cooking was common. People sometimes broiled meat by suspending it from a broiling stick or from a bone hook that itself hung from a piece of babiche line. Pieces of fat exposed near the heat of fire provided grease, the drippings being caught in bark containers. "Sometimes, when bear fat was rendered alongside a fire, some of the melted grease was taken and mixed with a little snow. It started to foam up just like ice cream." In summer moose horn could be warmed close to the fire and the "velvet" then scraped off and eaten. Only under exceptional circumstances did the Indians eat raw meat or fat.

[18] See below, p. 91.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tselona

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417 to the other, crowned such a structure. Families also utilized simpler platform caches, the food on these being covered with brush or bark held in place with heavy logs.

264 Women cooked on occasions when the family ate as a unit. Food was served on bark dishes or in wooden bowls. Spoons of sheep or caribou horn facilitated eating. People took meals twice a day, morning and night, both sexes as well as children eating together. An informant denied gormandizing, remarking that the people knew very well when to cease eating.

221 *Tselona.* The fat game in the high country attracted the families in autumn. With
222 the onset of winter the bands descended to a fish lake, from which the men went out
262 to fetch meat from caches, hauling back the food on skin toboggans. Often only two families spent the winter together at a fishing site—two brothers and their wives and children or about ten people in all. Summer sent the hunters to set snares for moose and goats. All summer the men "kept on the move," following game. The usual vegetable foods were gathered by women, including blueberries, low bush cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, currants, and soap berries. The latter berries were never mixed with grease [388] because the berries would "smell" the grease and "settle down again, not make soap." In other words, they would not froth as they did when mashed with water.[13] People ate lily bulbs raw as well as cooked. Bark vessels served to catch birch and poplar sap [261] for drinking. Both sexes chewed spruce gum but geophagy remained unpracticed. Spruce, birch, and jackpine fibers, peeled with a knife, were eaten raw, as was wild rhubarb which, however, people took pains to "skin." Wild onions were cooked with meat. The informant denied any use of willow buds and wild rice for food, the latter being unrecognised in this area. Two varieties of muskeg tea were sought by gatherers, the stems and leaves of both types being boiled. The species could be identified only as tas'huse and dimasket.

224 Our informant confidently stated that moose had always populated the country of
262 the Tselona but denied the presence of elk, wood buffalo, and mountain sheep. Moose were snared and also hunted with the bow, the hunter relying on semicircular tracking to approach within close range of his prey. In season the moose might be called with a dried moose scapula. No custom of removing moccasins while tracking game could be recalled. Sometimes a line of men moving forward in concerted action drove a moose toward a series of snares. Caribou were also caught in snares, and skin decoys further assisted in the hunting of that animal. A hunter who wanted to kill a bear when it was summer, sought to surprise the animal in a berry patch, shooting it first with an arrow and then finishing it off with a lance bearing a caribou-horn point. In winter men obtained bears by shooting them while in a den or by thrusting lances into the lair. Sometimes a smoke fire served to drive the animal out of its winter dwelling. Lances also aided in killing beaver in the spring. A porcupine could easily be clubbed to death but [784] in winter had first to be smoked out of its house. No taboo forbade the clubbing of any animal. Following the introduction of dogs, people employed them to track game. Other

[13] Yet Pike reports the coastal tribes to pound soap berries "till a thick froth, much resembling soap bubbles, gathers. . . . this froth, with a judicious mixture of salmon oil—or, better still, seal oil—they consider one of the things worth living for." Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 35-36.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Tsalona
Frances Lake

animals eaten included the muskrat, lynx, rabbit, ground hog, marten, and body louse. Ground hog, the informant pointed out, furnished a far more important source of food in the aboriginal period than did the rabbit. Women preserved a large number of ground hog from the fall for winter consumption. The fox and weasel were trapped for fur alone, while the skunk remained severely left alone. Birds caught for food included the owl, goose, duck, grouse, ptarmigan, swan, crane, and spruce hen. The eagle, crow, hawk, and loon played no role in the diet. Any successful hunter of large game, after butchering his prize, returned to camp and announced his good fortune, thus stimulating men and women to set out to secure a share of the meat. In general, butchering involved first the removal of an animal's skin, severing the limbs, and removing the viscera. The carcass could then be divided further.

Techniques of fishing included spearing with bone-pointed spears (the bone coming from the ankle of a moose), angling with bone points bearing moose-meat bait, and trapping with a fish weir. In winter weirs could be set in fast creeks that never froze; there were undoubtedly a number of such creeks on the Rocky Mountain slopes in the Tselona country. People did not fish with the aid of torches nor did they employ snares. Fish eaten included the grayling, sucker, ling (loche), whitefish, and trout. Salmon did not extend into this region.

Only when fire could not be provided did the Indians venture to consume raw meat. Hot-stone boiling in bark vessels served as the standard procedure for preparing flesh food. Pit cooking as well as stomach boiling were both denied. Blood went into the preparation of soup as did additional rendered grease. Although occasionally fired by boiling, foetal animals were generally broiled, always in their entirety without the viscera being removed. A hunter did not neglect the opportunity to drink raw milk when he had slain an animal with full mammary glands.

As elsewhere in the northern forest the group recognized late September and October as a period suitable for meat drying. Now smudge fires could be neglecting without risking the danger of blow flies spoiling the food. For preservation women cut the meat of large game animals into long thin slices but ground hogs, minus the viscera, were dried in their entirety. Berries dried as they lay spread on a flat surface and, like other dehydrated foods, might be freshened again by soaking them in water. Skin bags contained pemmican, made of chopped meat and grease and without berries. The informant denied that viscera had ever been stuffed.

An entire family ate together, taking food from birch bark dishes. (Spruce bark was avoided because it imparted a pitchy taste to the food.) Periods of starvation visited the community not infrequently and sometimes resulted from caches ransacked by grizzly bears or other animal marauders. Only by quickly locating a well-stocked source of fish could famine be avoided. Cannibalism sometimes made an appearance in periods of starvation. The sight of much food promoted the tendency to overeat, especially following a period of limited rations. At such a time friends advised a hungry man to resume eating with caution, first offering him moose blood and pointing out that death might ensue if he ate meat straight off.

Frances Lake Kaska. No data on the food quest were sought from Frances Lake in-